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Nigeria: The government is laying the groundwork for the reintegration of Biafra into the federation.

General Effiong, Biafran leader Ojukwu's successor, met yesterday with General Gowon and formally renounced secession. Gowon then declared a general amnesty for all those who had been "misguided" into secession, reflecting the continuing effort by the federal government to reassure the Eastern tribesmen that there will be an equitable reconstruction. Effiong was accompanied by several civilian secessionist leaders, including Ibos.

Meanwhile, Ojukwu's statement yesterday claiming that Biafra will survive and calling for an international presence in secessionist territory to prevent "genocide" probably will not have any immediate effect on events in the former enclave. Ojukwu is a charismatic figure, however, and he could become a rallying point for resistance if the federal occupation goes badly. There are conflicting reports on Ojukwu's whereabouts, but the weight of evidence suggests that he is in Gabon.

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USSR: The production of crude oil from the remote, but rich, oilfields of West Siberia is to be accelerated to compensate for declining rates of growth in older producing areas.

A decree published yesterday orders production in West Siberia to be increased ten-fold by 1980. This raises the 1980 target there from the range of 135-160 million tons to 230-260 million tons. The goal for total production of crude oil in the USSR in 1980, recently set at 550-600 million tons, remains unchanged, however. No substantial change is predicted for the Soviet export position.

Some 70 percent of Soviet oil now comes from the favorably located Urals-Volga region. In 1967 a Soviet spokesman predicted that production in that region would increase to a peak of 240 million tons per year in 1980, but it now seems probable that annual production in the next few years will be stabilized at a level of about 200 million tons. West Siberia appears to be the only region where the Soviets can hope to compensate for the slowing rate of growth in production from the Urals-Volga region.

The oil deposits in West Siberia are known to be huge, but considerable capital investment will be required to develop them. Difficult geological formations will greatly increase the drilling requirements and will necessitate the application of sophisticated technology, which the Soviet oil industry has yet to master. West Siberia also is distant from the principal oil consuming regions of the country and is poorly served with power lines, roads, railroads, and pipelines. Accelerated development of oil extraction in the region will double the Soviet requirement for pipe, a commodity that already is in very short supply. The severe climate and marshy terrain of West Siberia hamper all operations, and the harsh living conditions make it hard to attract and retain labor.

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Western Europe: A Dutch proposal for an alternative to the multirole combat aircraft (MRCA) project will probably not meet approval by Bonn, the largest potential backer.

The Dutch bowed out of the MRCA consortium last July, objecting to the project's high costs and numerous political factors that have hindered its development. They have attempted to arouse interest in a "mini-consortium" that could achieve the same goal as the MRCA--replacement of the F-104, which has been the backbone of the interceptor force of many allied countries during the past decade.

The Dutch want a cooperative venture that would provide them with 100 light, highly maneuverable air-superiority fighters; they are willing to consider construction of an existing aircraft by their consortium. The likely prospects include the Northrop P-530, the SAAB Viggen, and the Dassault F-1.

[redacted] probably by April, the Italians, who have been unhappy with the MRCA project, will join the Norwegians, Canadians, and Dutch in the "mini-consortium." [redacted] the Swiss, Australians, Japanese, and Iranians have also shown interest, and that there is a good chance that Bonn will join as well.

West German support for the MRCA continues unabated, however, and because it is the largest purchaser of the new fighters, Bonn could determine the fate of a consortium's effort. The MRCA fulfills West German fighter requirements more completely than do the aircraft the Dutch have in mind.

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Dominican Republic: Security forces have captured a top Communist leader.

Maximiliano Gomez, the Secretary-General of the Dominican Popular Movement (MPD), was reportedly apprehended on Wednesday. The MPD has been the most active terrorist group and is credited with several assassinations of military personnel. Gomez has often been listed as a prime target for government "murder squads."

Some Communists will probably attempt to stir violent protests in the capital. Although their recent efforts have had only marginal success, the Communists may be moved to provoke clashes with the police because of the capture of their secretary general. If Gomez is murdered, some hotheads may attempt to assassinate a high level military figure in retribution, but the majority of the Communists will probably be discouraged by the government's action.

Whatever the fate of Gomez, the extreme left is unlikely to shift immediately from its official policy of sporadic terrorism to an outright confrontation with the administration as long as the military remains united behind President Balaguer. Balaguer, perhaps under pressure from the military, has recently taken an increasingly tough line toward the left, and the government is probably braced for trouble.

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Central America: Honduran intransigence continues to block restoration of the Central American Common Market to its former effectiveness.

The five Central American economic ministers met last week for the first time since last summer's conflict between El Salvador and Honduras. All except the Honduran minister were prepared to allow the Market's executive organs to resume formal operations immediately. The Hondurans, however, have maintained that the conflict terminated the Market's legal framework. They insist that a modus operandi be worked out to govern the Market until a more complete restructuring can be negotiated. The five ministers will meet again next month to try to end the impasse.

Preparations are also under way for bilateral talks between El Salvador and Honduras. Both sides have already accepted former OAS Secretary General Jose Mora as moderator, and meetings are expected to begin later this month in Costa Rica. Honduran insistence on a commitment to settle the border dispute as a precondition to talks on other topics will undoubtedly be unacceptable to El Salvador, and rapid progress is unlikely.

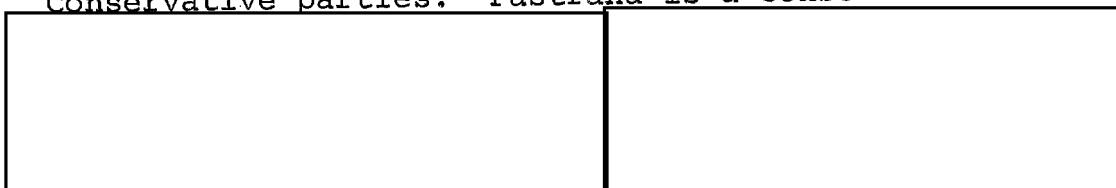
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Colombia: The presidential campaign of Misael Pastrana, candidate of the National Front, is in trouble.

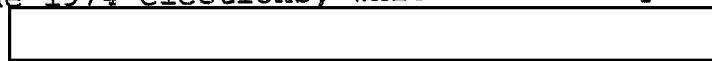
The election on 19 April is scheduled to be the last under the National Front, which provides for alternating the presidency between the Liberal and Conservative parties. Pastrana is a Conservative



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Pastrana has shown himself willing to yield to pressures from various political factions, thus alienating some of his supporters. In addition, he has failed to generate any popular enthusiasm and has shown little acumen in choosing his campaign team. Many of his Liberal Party supporters fear that Pastrana's disorganization will ultimately damage their own chances in the 1974 elections, which will be open to all parties.



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East Germany - West Germany: The first "unofficial" reaction of the East Germans to Chancellor Brandt's state of the nation address was predictably negative. It does not, however, shut the door to future talks. The Bonn correspondent of East Germany's official news agency criticized Brandt both for what he said and did not say. He characterized as unsatisfactory the Chancellor's statement that he will propose talks on a renunciation of force agreement, and attacked Brandt for not discussing the draft treaty Ulbricht sent to Bonn in December. One form of reply will come from party boss Ulbricht, who has scheduled a press conference on 19 January.

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Lebanon: The government may try to impose a measure of control over the Arab commandos. Minister of Interior Jumblatt yesterday gave the fedayeen 48 hours to evacuate their quarters in all inhabited areas of southern Lebanon. He threatened to take punitive measures if they failed to comply. Jumblatt's demand followed an anti-fedayeen demonstration in a southern Lebanese town where the fedayeen had set up an office next to a school. Should the government move against the fedayeen, violence is likely. Normally, the government would not want to clash with the commandos, but it is mindful of recent Israeli threats of retaliation if the fedayeen are not controlled.

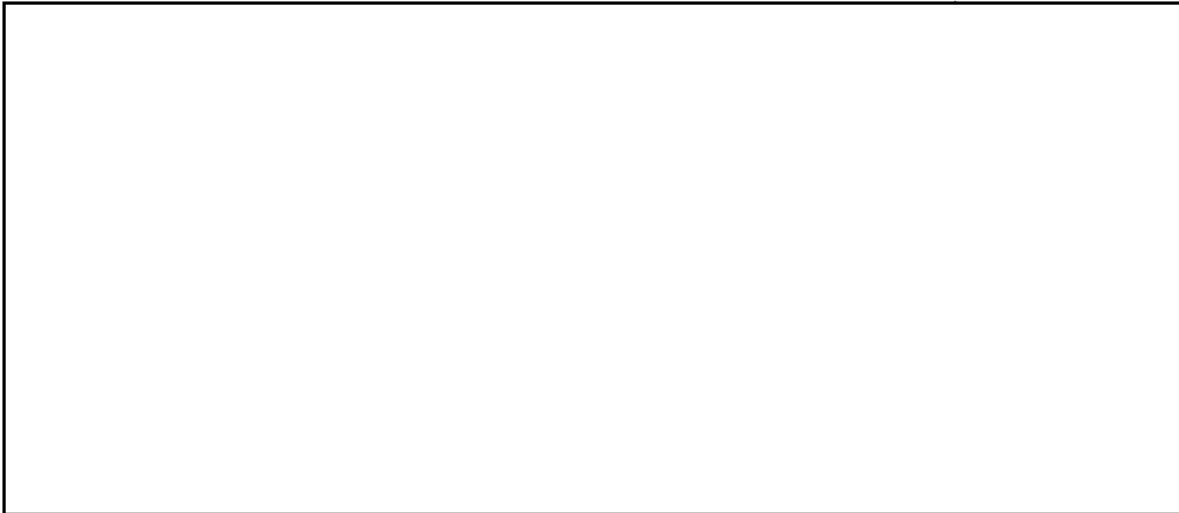
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USSR: Moscow is seeking 60,000 tons of beef and mutton from Australia and New Zealand for delivery by the end of May. Similar approaches may be made to Latin American countries. [redacted]

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[redacted] the value of such an order at about \$24 million--equal to almost two-thirds the value of meat and meat products imported by the USSR in 1968.

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[redacted] The Soviets also are seeking as much as 6,600 tons of poultry from France.

Difficulties in the Soviet meat industry were admitted in an editorial in Pravda on 13 January that stated that problems in the livestock sector have led to a meat supply problem in major cities. The USSR, however, also exports meat and meat products, selling \$45 million more than it imported in 1968. [redacted]

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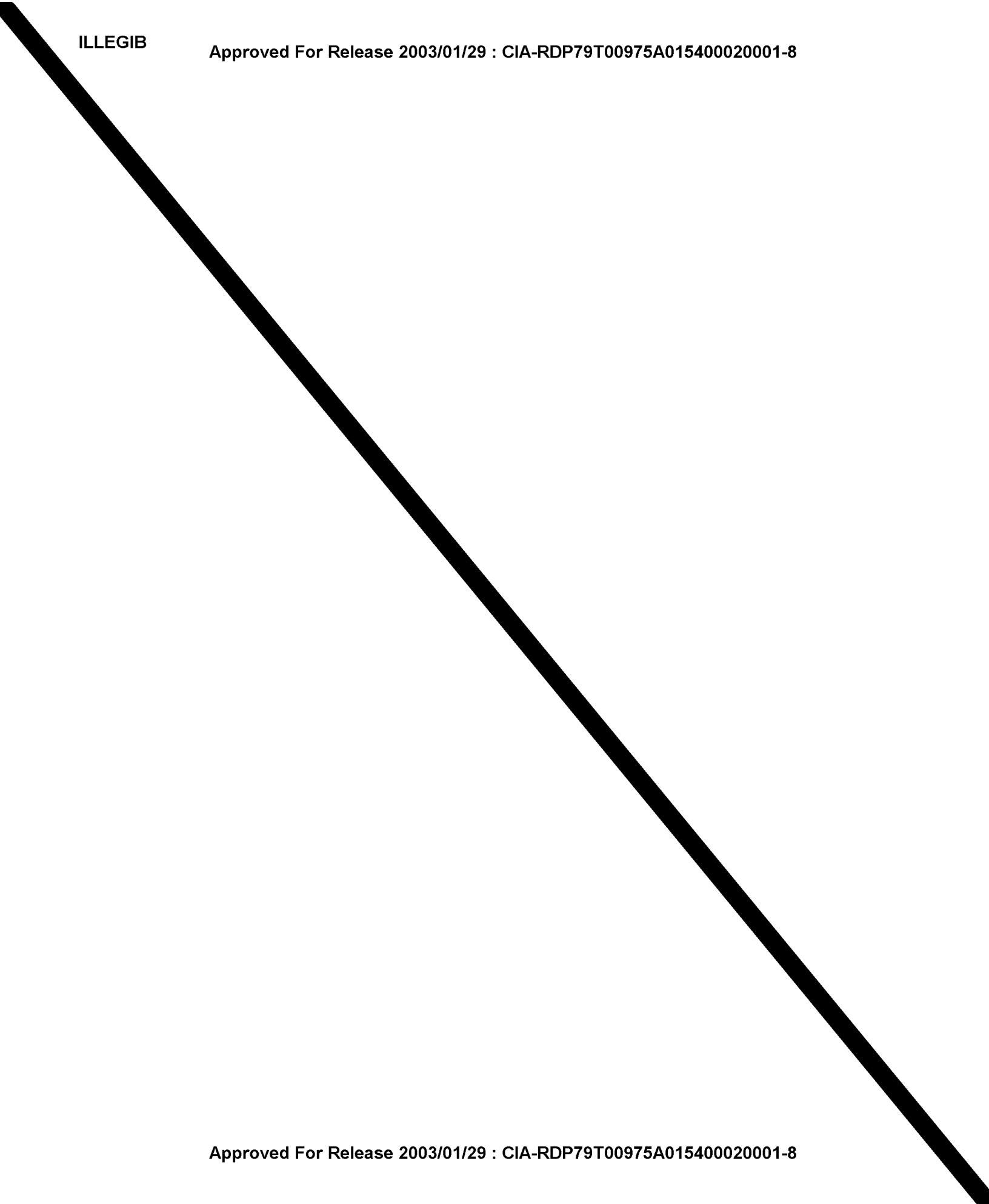
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